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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000737

SIPDIS

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J5 PRIORITY  
JICPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/OP/NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2012  
TAGS: PTER PGOV CASC NP  
SUBJECT: 50 REPORTED DEAD IN MAOIST ATTACKS ON POLICE POSTS  
IN DANG

REF: (A) KATHMANDU 731

Classified By: AMB. MICHAEL E. MALINOWSKI. REASON: 1.5(B,D).

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) At least 50 people are reported dead after Maoist insurgents attacked a civilian police post and an Armed Police Force (APF) post in the western district of Dang about 30 km from the Indian border late April 11. The insurgents are reported to have looted armories at both posts, making off with an unknown number of weapons, according to police sources. Smaller-scale attacks on two Royal Nepal Army (RNA) posts and a second APF post were successfully repulsed. The attacks discredit reports in the press and on the political/NGO rumor circuit that the Maoists are seeking ways to resume dialogue. End summary.

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DANG AGAIN  
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¶2. (U) In an eerie reminder of the coordinated attacks on Dang military and police targets that broke the cease-fire November 23, late April 11 Maoist insurgents once again launched a series of closely timed raids on five military and police targets in the southwestern district close to the Indian border. Royal Nepal Army (RNA) soldiers successfully repulsed small-arms fire on two of their posts in the district, while an attack on a training center for the paramilitary Armed Police Force (APF) was also repelled. (Note: These attacks may have been diversionary tactics to prevent reinforcements being sent to the other two posts under attack. End note.)

¶3. (U) At about 11:00 p.m. Maoists attacked the 65-man police station at Lamahi (on the East-West Highway about 25 km due south of district headquarters and about 30 km north of the Indian border). According to police sources, nine policemen were killed and 63 .303 rifles taken from the armory. The insurgents also stopped a bus at a roadblock and shot some of the passengers, killing one (reportedly the driver), and injuring seven.

¶4. (U) At about 11:30 p.m. the 125-man company of the APF at Satbariya--hometown of Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadga--was attacked. (Note: Satbariya is off the main highway, a few km west of Lamahi and about 30 km north of the Indian border. End note.) Fighting continued until about 2:20 a.m. the following morning when, according to survivors of the attack, the embattled APF ran out of ammunition. After the Deputy Superintendent in command of the company surrendered, survivors said, he and three other inspectors were executed. According to the National Security Council, 40 APF were killed in the attack, and another 40 wounded.

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THE VIEW FROM THE RNA OPS CENTER  
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¶5. (C) Members of a PACOM assessment team happened to be visiting the RNA Operations Center the morning of April 12 and were briefed on--and able to observe in part--the RNA's reaction to the crisis. The Ops Center first became aware of the attacks when reports came over HF radio about 1:30 a.m. At about 2:00 a.m. a radio transmission from the APF company at Satbariya requested ammunition resupply. An RNA M-17 helicopter took off from Western Division Headquarters in Nepalganj with the requested ammunition, but was hit by enemy fire near the site and was forced to return. At about 2:15 a.m. a second request for ammunition came in, but a second helicopter dispatched to the site lost communications with

the APF site, was unable to determine the situation on the ground, and was ordered to return to Nepalgunj as well. According to the RNA, the attack was launched from the south; after the attack the insurgents were observed heading to the north.

16. (C) Brig. Gen. Dipak Malla, Director of Military Operations, who was in the Ops Center during the PACOM team's visit, briefed the assessment team on the RNA's response to the attacks, including the construction of blocking forces along the road to Nepalgunj; the dispatch of patrols to track insurgents retreating to the north; the dispatch of two fixed-wing aircraft and a helicopter to Nepalgunj to bring in ammunition and pick up wounded; and the preparation of the military hospital to receive the wounded. Malla told the team the RNA had received general indications that Dang was a transit point and that activities in the area were increasing. Malla said the RNA had advised the APF to conduct searches in response to this information, but the APF had not done so.

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"PEACE" FEELERS  
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17. (C) The Dang attacks follow closely on increased reports in the press, as well as rumors among political observers and human rights groups, that the Maoists are seeking a way to restart dialogue with the Government of Nepal (GON). Two NGOs have told poloffs over the past two weeks that their Maoists contacts were actively seeking a channel to the GON, but the sources were unable to explain convincingly why the Maoists might be contemplating such a bid. At the same time, other reports are circulating that former Prime Minister G.P. Koirala--whose relations with the insurgents during his own administration were abysmal--may be trying to meet Maoist deputy Baburam Bhattarai in India (reftel), presumably for the same purpose. (Note: The bloody Maoist attacks in Achham Feb. 17 followed similar rumors, and actually took place during a visit by a representative of a reputable conflict mitigation group, reportedly at the behest of high-ranking Maoists who had signaled their wish to resume talks with the GON. End note.)

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COMMENT  
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18. (C) The Maoists' actions speak louder than whatever they, for their own cynical purposes, may be telling NGOs and politicians or saying in their press statements. As long as the Maoists can overrun and disarm a relatively well-manned APF post, popular confidence in the GON's ability to protect the general population--emergency or not--will continue to decline. End comment.

MALINOWSKI